

# U.S. SENATOR BEN CARDIN



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January 3, 2022

Dear Fellow Marylander:

Happy New Year! I start 2022 thankful for the continuing honor of representing Maryland in the United States Senate. The last 12 months have been rough at times, but they also have been some of the most consequential of my career.

After watching our democracy come under a blistering attack on [January 6](#), we inaugurated a [new president and vice president](#) on January 20. Shortly after, Congress approved the [American Rescue Plan](#), which finally brought the full resources of the federal government together in the fight against COVID-19. We delivered money to families in need, supercharged the vaccination program, helped small businesses stay afloat and supported our local and state governments on the frontlines. It has been overwhelming the number of small business owners who have told me how the [Paycheck Protection Act](#) that I helped create was the difference that allowed their business to survive the hardest of times.

Nearly [6 million jobs were created](#) over the last 11 months and unemployment claims are at a 40-year low. Gas and many other prices are still too high, but [wages also are increasing](#) and we've lifted millions of children out of poverty through the expanded Child Tax Credit.

Helping drive our economic recovery is the landmark news that [more than 200 million Americans have been vaccinated](#) – including 80 percent of Marylanders who received at least one dose. President Joe Biden recently added to our arsenal an aggressive [nationwide testing program](#) that will help protect our communities and our families.

Also in 2021, I had the privilege of attending the White House ceremony when President Biden signed the [Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act](#)—the bipartisan infrastructure package that I, and many of my colleagues, worked hard to develop. Funding for projects in Maryland and other states has started, helping finance the long-awaited modernization of our nation's infrastructure. We are investing in improvements to transit service, speeding the flow of goods at our ports, renovating airport terminals, replacing deteriorating bridges, making roadways

safer, expanding broadband networks to tens of millions of households, improving water quality by fixing aging pipes and many other projects that have been lacking sufficient federal resources to move them forward.

Throughout 2022, every week will be “[Infrastructure Week](#)” as ongoing investments will help create high-paying jobs, expand local opportunities, strengthen our competitiveness, address climate change, enhance safety, and improve lives.

The work to build a stronger economy and more equitable nation never ends. As we fight the omicron variant, we must continue to invest in working families and small businesses. The Senate and House of Representatives must find a path forward for the [Build Back Better plan](#), which will lower everyday costs for families by investing in childcare and education. The House-passed plan will expand affordable health care to millions of uninsured, who currently are priced out of the marketplace, and it would boost our economy while combatting climate change through targeted investments in clean technology, buildings, transportation, agriculture and more. Importantly, as it is written, this package will not add to the deficit.

While COVID-19 [positivity rates](#) are on the rise again, vaccines mostly have been doing their job by keeping the majority of those who have been fully vaccinated from the most serious of complications of COVID-19. We are hearing more about break-through cases, but hospitalizations and deaths related to COVID-19 primarily have been among the unvaccinated. The current surge in [hospitalizations](#) in Maryland and elsewhere nationwide confirms this sad reality.

If you have not already been fully vaccinated, I urge you to do so [as soon as possible](#). And get your booster shot, as it has been shown to make a tremendous difference against the latest variant of the virus.

I started this email talking about the attack on our democracy. The insurrection at the U.S. Capitol on January 6 may have failed, but the attacks on democracy continue every day as [many states work aggressively to scale back voting rights](#). Voting is bedrock to our system of government and every eligible voter in every state should be able to exercise their right without intimidation or undue obstacles built up solely to keep them from voting. Congress must pass federal voting rights standards, like the [John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act](#). We must do all we can, including changing the rules of the Senate, to ensure that our elections continue to be free and fair. Inaction is not an option. There is too much at stake.

Last year was one filled with pain and joy, setbacks and advancements. I look ahead to 2022 with measured optimism that the American people and our democracy will show equal parts of resilience and grit.

Like so many of you, I am grateful for my health and my family. I mourn the loss of those who left us in the last year, including family, friends and neighbors. My hope for the new year is that we make our way out of this pandemic and stay focused on helping each other and moving our nation in a positive direction.

Thank you for your time. Stay well.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ben". The signature is stylized with a large, cursive "B" and a smaller "en" following it.

Ben Cardin